

# Environmental Assessment

## Makoshika State Park Water Line Project



March 2020



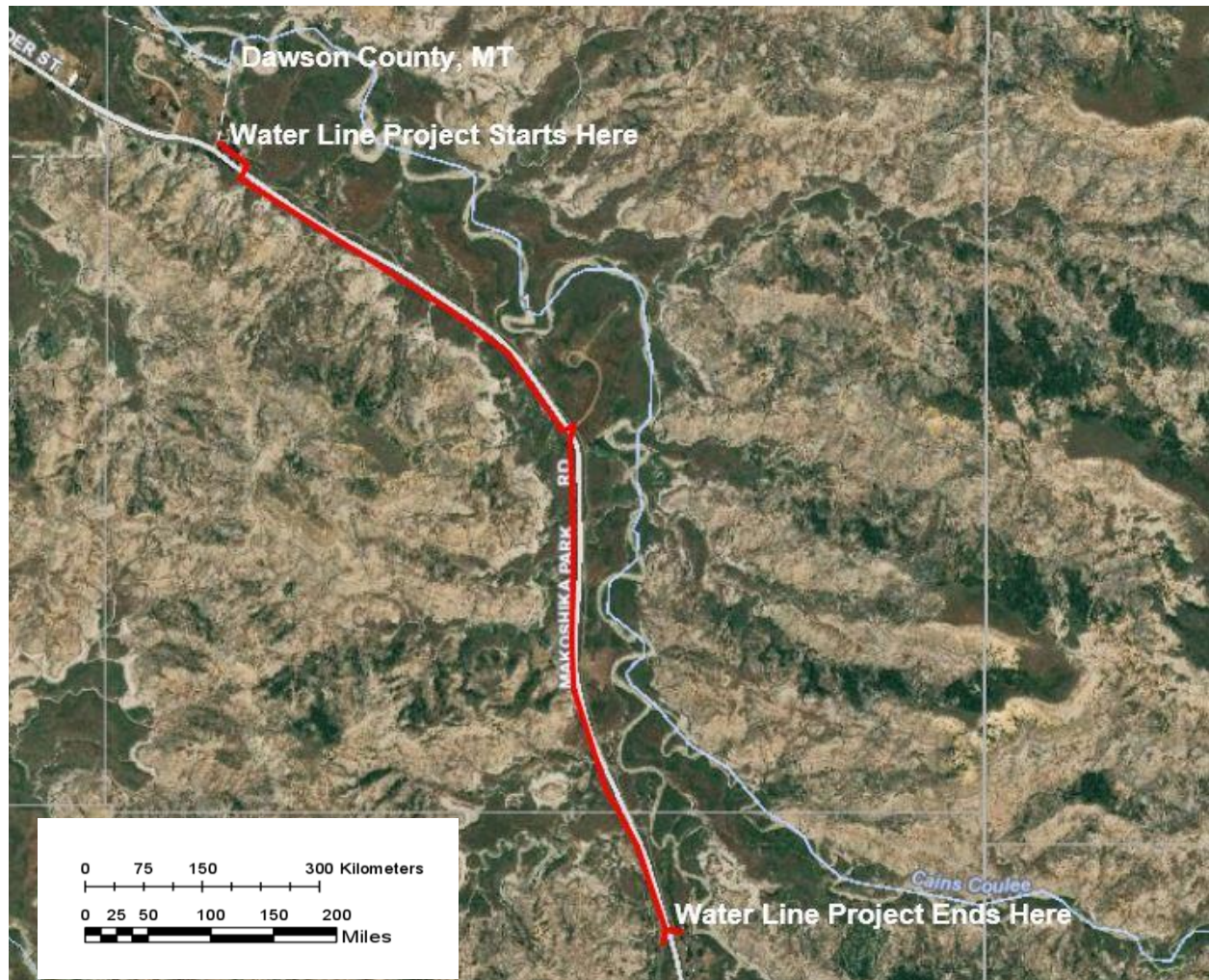
***Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks***

Draft Environmental Assessment  
**MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST**

**PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION**

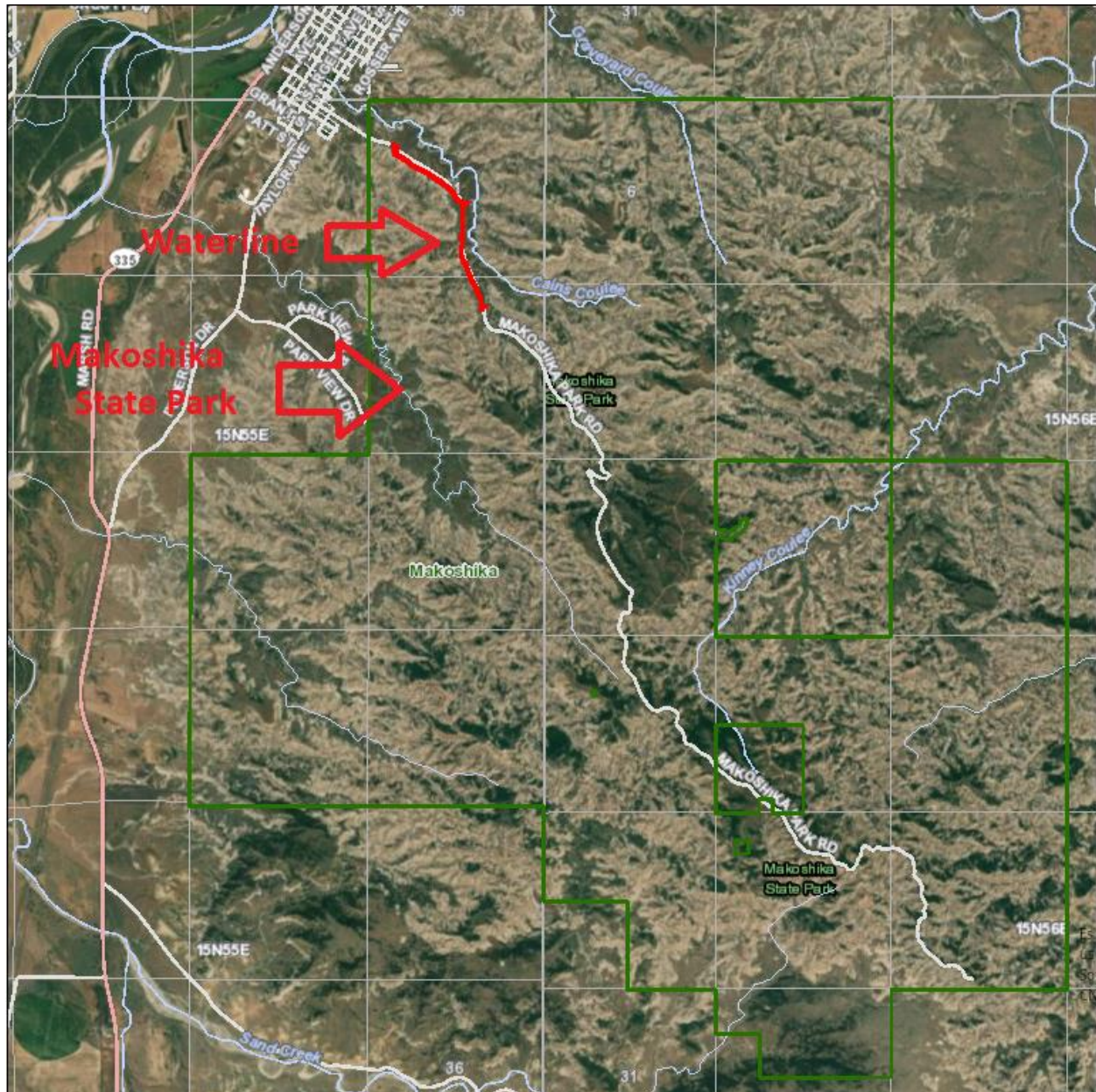
1. **Type of proposed state action:** This proposed project will improve the public water distribution at Makoshika State Park in Glendive, Montana. Presently potable water is only available at the park visitor center. This proposed project will extend the clean potable public water supply to multiple locations of up to 1 mile further into the park.
  
2. **Agency authority for the proposed action: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks**  
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks through its Parks Division has the authority to develop outdoor recreational resources in the state per 23-2-101 Montana Code Annotated (MCA): *“for the purposes of conserving the scenic, historic, archaeologic, scientific, and recreational resources of the state and providing their use and enjoyment, thereby contributing to the cultural, recreational and economic life of the people and their health.”*  
Statute 23-1-110 MCA and Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) 12.2.433 guide public involvement and comment for the improvements at state parks, which this document provides. ARM 12.8.602 required the Department to consider the wishes of the public, the capacity of the site for the development, environmental impacts, long-range maintenance, protection of natural features and impacts on tourism as these elements relate to development or improvement to state parks. This document describes the proposed project in relation to this rule.
  
3. **Anticipated Schedule:**  
Estimated Commencement Date: August 2020  
Estimated Completion Date: December 2020  
Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 65%
  
- 4 **Location affected by proposed action (county, range and township – included map):** Map is attached with info.

# Project Area in Makoshika State Park





# Makoshika State Park Location



**5. Project size -- estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:**

	<u>Acres</u>		<u>Acres</u>
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	<u>0</u>
Residential	<u>0</u>		
Industrial	<u>0</u>	(e) Productive:	
(existing shop area)		Irrigated cropland	<u>0</u>
(b) Open Space/	<u>0</u>	Dry cropland	<u>0</u>
Woodlands/Recreation		Forestry	<u>0</u>
(c) Wetlands/Riparian	<u>0</u>	Rangeland	<u>0</u>
Areas		Other	<u>1.2</u>

**6. Permits, Funding & Overlapping Jurisdiction.**

(a) **Permits:** Contractor will be responsible for all required permits for this project.

(b) **Funding:**

Agency Name Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Funding Amount \$1.3 Million Dollars Bonded Project

**7. Narrative summary of the proposed action:**

Makoshika State Park was designated a state park in 1953 and is Montana's largest state park with a total of 11,501 acres. Makoshika State Park is a destination park classified as a park with an "enhanced" level of service for its ranger of amenities and options for visitor experiences. Visitation in 2019 was 85,272. Makoshika is situated adjacent to the community of Glendive near interstate 94 a major Montana travel corridor.

The park is an important natural and recreational resource to the community of Glendive. The state park is well known for its paleontology as nine species of dinosaur fossils have been found in the park. The park visitor center also has a paleontology lab where many fossils are stored and the park staff work annually with the famed Museum of the Rockies staff.

The park has many amenities including a campground, visitor center, 11 designated trails, pavilion, archery area, 200-seat amphitheater, and a PDGA disc golf course. In 2017 Makoshika State Park was voted by the public as the USA Today's number one attraction in the state of Montana.

During the 2019 legislative session \$1.3 million in bonded funds were approved for the extension of the municipal water from the City of Glendive into Makoshika State Park as part of a statewide infrastructure improvement initiative.

The current city water services reach as far as the visitor center which is the only location throughout the park that visitors have access to potable water.

**Proposed Action:** Extend the existing city water line 1 mile through the park from the visitor center to the existing campground, Kiwanis pavilion and proposed campground.

**Need for the Action:** It is necessary that these visitors have readily accessible water near their campsites. It is inconvenient and, in some circumstances, unsafe to require campers to travel back and forth from the campsite to the visitor center to retrieve the water they need.

**Objectives for the Action(s):** The objective for this project is to provide convenient access to potable water at the most frequently visited locations of the park.

**8. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives:**

**Alternative A: No Action**

If no action is taken access to potable water for visitors will continue to be limited.

**Alternative B: Proposed Action**

The project as described above will extend water service further into the park from the existing water access point at the visitor center. This alternative would improve visitor services by providing potable water to the Kiwanis Shelter and campground.

**9. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:**

The contractor selected for the project will be responsible for all required permits for this project.

## **PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST**

**Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.**

### **A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

1. <b><u>LAND RESOURCES</u></b> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X			1b
c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				

1b. Disruption of over laying soil will occur to install the extended water line but upon completion should have no major impact on the productivity or fertility of the area.

2. <b><u>AIR</u></b> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13 (c).)			X			2a
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				

2a. Some dust will be generated during construction. Watering and other techniques will be utilized to minimize dust.

3. <u>WATER</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				

No negative impacts anticipated



4. <b><u>VEGETATION</u></b> Will the proposed action result in?	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?		X				
b. Alteration of a plant community?			X			4b
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?		X				
f. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:						

4b. Temporary disruption of grass in the construction area. Anticipate full recovery of the affected areas post construction.

5. <b><u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u></b> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		X				

5. FWP Wildlife Biologist, Melissa Foster, and FWP Fisheries Biologist, Mat Rugg, were both contacted about the project and they did not have any concerns about the project.

## B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Increases in existing noise levels?		X				
b. Exposure of people to sever or nuisance noise levels?			X			6b
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				

6b. Construction noise during the project will occur. Visitors will be informed of the project.

7. <u>LAND USE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				

<b>8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u></b>  <b>Will the proposed action result in:</b>	<b>IMPACT</b>					
	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>	<b>Can Impact Be Mitigated</b>	<b>Comment Index</b>
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		X				
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				

<b>9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u></b>  <b>Will the proposed action result in:</b>	<b>IMPACT</b>					
	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>	<b>Can Impact Be Mitigated</b>	<b>Comment Index</b>
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				

9. The project will have a positive impact for the park and the community of Glendive, MT. The increased access to potable water throughout the park with increase visitor and camper satisfaction. With the only current water access site at the visitor center, it is inconvenient for visitors to have to return to the center any time they need water.

<b>10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u></b> <b>Will the proposed action result in:</b>	<b>IMPACT</b>					
	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>	<b>Can Impact Be Mitigated</b>	<b>Comment Index</b>
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:			X Positive			10a
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?			X			10d
e. Define projected revenue sources						10e
f. Define projected maintenance costs.						10f

10a. Extending the current city water service line one mile into the park will have a positive impact on the current water supply by creating four new access locations in the park.

10d. The installation of a pumphouse to ensure water reaches to new access locations will require an increase in electrical use.

10e. House Bill 652 (bond bill)

10f. Costs to maintain the water line after the project is complete are not anticipated to exceed \$1,000 annually.

<b>11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u></b> <b>Will the proposed action result in:</b>	<b>IMPACT</b>					
	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>	<b>Can Impact Be Mitigated</b>	<b>Comment Index</b>
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report.)			X Positive			11c

11c. New water access areas throughout the park will enhance visitor satisfaction in the park. In 2019 Makoshika State Park hosted more than 85,000 visitors. Improved water service will benefit visitors well into the future.

12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				12a
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				

12a. Makoshika is a popular area of paleontological resources and so there is always the possibility of uncovering fossils. This project will be almost completely within areas disturbed in the past and so potential for uncovering paleo resources is slim. There will be some deeper excavation in problem areas, possibly up to six to seven feet. If any paleo resources are uncovered, the contractor will be required to stop immediately, and a qualified specialist will be called in to investigate and to take any needed action to either protect in place or remove the fossils.

In accordance with the Montana Antiquities Act (22-3-421 to 22-3-442) and with FWPs

ARM rules (12.8.501 to 12.8.10):

Parks staff would work closely with the Montana State Park's Heritage Resource Program Manager and the Montana's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on this project to ensure protection of historic resources in the park.

## SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. <u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</u> Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				



### **PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

Makoshika State Park is an important paleontology and archeological site not only for the state of Montana but also the United States. The state park is a very important part of Montana tourism. Makoshika State Park's high visitation and its importance to the Glendive Community prompted the 2019 legislature to provide \$1.3 million in bond funding for this project.

The waterline project would have a positive impact on visitor satisfaction and the local and statewide recreation and tourism industry, by providing better access to potable water at popular visitation locations.

Because of the proposed project will be in a previously disturbed area, the impacts to the physical and human environments would be minimal. Based on this analysis an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

### **PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

#### **1. Public involvement:**

The public will be notified in the following manners to comment on this current EA, the proposed action and alternatives:

- Two public notices in each of these papers: Glendive Ranger Review, Helena Independent Record and Miles City Star
- One statewide press release
- Public notice on the Montana State Parks website: <http://stateparks.mt.gov/>

Copies of this environmental assessment will be distributed to the neighboring landowners and interested parties to ensure their knowledge of the proposed project.

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope having limited impacts, many of which can be mitigated.

#### **2. Duration of comment period:**

The public comment period will extend for (30) thirty days. Written comments will be accepted from March 25, 2020 to 5 p.m. April 25, 2020 and can be mailed or emailed to the addresses below: [Raymond K Schell](#), [Acting Regional](#) Park Manager Box [8 Decker](#), MT 59025 [Raymond.Schell@mt.gov](mailto:Raymond.Schell@mt.gov)

## **PART V. EA PREPARATION**

- 1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? (YES/NO)? No**

**If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.**

Based on an evaluation of impacts to the physical and human environment under MEPA, this environmental review revealed no significant negative impacts from the proposed action; therefore an EIS is not necessary and an environmental assessment is the appropriate level of analysis in determining the significance of impacts.

**2. Person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:**  
**Chris Dantic, Makoshika State Park Manager**  
**Maribeth Ault, Makoshika State Park Ranger**  
**Chandler Sendek, Montana State Parks AmeriCorps Member**

- 3. List of agencies or offices consulted during preparation of the EA:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks – Parks, Fisheries, and Wildlife Divisions and the Responsive Management Unit, Design and Construction Bureau

Interstate Engineering

Montana Office of Tourism – Department of Commerce

**APPENDIX A**  
23-1-110 MCA  
PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST

**Date:**01/31/2020

**Person Reviewing:** Chris Dantic

**Project Location:** Makoshika State Park

**Description of Proposed Work:**

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed development or improvement is of enough significance to fall under 23-1-110 rules. (Please check ☐ all that apply and comment as necessary.)

- [ ☐ ] A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?  
Comments: *Not anticipated*
- [ ☒ ] B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?  
Comments: *Yes, installation of new pumphouse.*
- [ ☒ ] C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?  
Comments: *Yes, but immediately adjacent to existing road bed.*
- [ ☐ ] D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?  
Comments:
- [ ☐ ] E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a doublewide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?  
Comments:
- [ ☐ ] F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?  
Comments:
- [ ☐ ] G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?  
Comments:

- [ ] H. Any new above ground utility lines?  
Comments:
- [ ] I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?  
Comments:
- [ ] J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects?  
Comments:

If any of the above are checked, 23-1-110 MCA rules apply to this proposed work and should be documented on the MEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST. Refer to MEPA/HB495 Cross Reference Summary for further assistance.

## Appendix B

Tourism Report  
**MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA)/HB652 (Bond Bill)**

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks have initiated the review process as mandated by HB652 (Bond Bill) and the Montana Environmental Policy Act in its consideration of the project described below. As part of the review process, input and comments have been solicited Helena, MT 59601

**Project Name:** Makoshika State Park Water Line Project

**Project Location:** Makoshika State Park, Dawson County.

**Project Description:** Montana State Parks proposes to extend the city water line from the visitor center to several new locations throughout the park. The current city water line reaches as far as the visitor center, this is the only location throughout the park that visitors have access to water. The proposed action will extend the city water line 1 mile from the visitor center to the existing campground, Kiwanis pavilion and the proposed site of the new campground. This will include a pumphouse near the visitor center to ensure water reaches all the way to the existing campground. The proposed plan will allow visitors access to water in various locations throughout the park instead of having to go to the visitor center, increasing visitor convenience and satisfaction.

1. Would this site development project have an impact on the tourism economy?  
NO **YES** If YES, briefly describe:

Yes, as described, this project has the potential to positively impact the tourism and recreation industry economy. We are assuming the agency has determined it has necessary funding for the on-going operations and maintenance once this project is completed. Makoshika State Park is a critical asset for both non-resident and resident visitors.

Over 90,000 annual visitors come to Makoshika to experience incredible badlands scenery, it is imperative they are provided access to potable water in more than just one location throughout the park.

2. Does this impending improvement alter the quality or quantity of recreation/tourism opportunities and settings?  
NO **YES** If YES, briefly describe:

Yes, as described, the project has the potential to improve quality and quantity of tourism and recreational opportunities as well as maintain important safety and security infrastructure for visitors. We are assuming the agency has determined it has necessary funding for the on-going operations and maintenance once this project is complete.

Signature /s/ Jan Stoddard

Date: 2/01/20